

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, and 15 have been canceled. Claims 12, 16, and 17 are amended. Claims 12-14 and 16-18 remain in the application.

Claims 1-12

Claims 1-12 are rejected for obviousness over US Patent No. 6,658,013 ("de Boer") in view of US Patent No. 6,587,470 ("Elliot"). The rejection is moot with respect to claims 1-11 which have been cancelled, and is traversed with respect to claim 12 as amended.

According to claim 12, a bidirectional line switch ring (BLSR) system using a pair of integrated circuit (IC) relay devices comprises:

"a first relay including:

an input switch having a default input and a duplex input to receive communications, a control port to accept switch commands, and an output to supply the selected communications;

a default output; and

a duplex output connected to the default input; and

a second relay including:

an input switch having a default input and a duplex input to receive communications, a control port to accept switch commands, and an output to supply the selected communications;

a default output; and

a duplex output connected to the default input;

wherein the duplex output of the first relay is connected to the duplex input of the second relay; and

wherein the duplex output of the second relay is connected to the duplex input of the first relay."

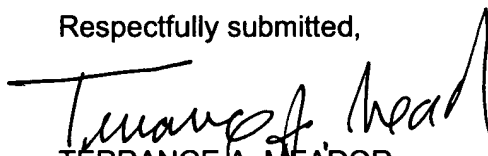
The cross-connection of the duplex input of each relay with the duplex output of the other relay now explicitly recited in claim 12 is absent from de Boer. In de Boer, no duplex output of one gateway node is connected to the duplex input of another gateway node. Nor is such a cross-connection suggested since the gateway nodes are constructed and operated for inter-ring connection. While de Boer does disclose that a signal headed in a ring for a failed gateway node will be looped back around the protection path of the ring, the reference contains no description of how such looping is accomplished.

Claims 13-18

Claims 13-18 are rejected for obviousness over de Boer and Elliot and further in view of US Patent 6,690,884 ("Kelty"). This rejection is moot with respect to claim 15 which is canceled and is traversed with respect to claims 13, 14, and 16-18 for the reasons given above in support of claim 12.

Accordingly, in view of these amendments and remarks, the claims remaining in the application are patentably distinguishable over the references of record.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: July 29, 2004

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